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Fewer know that the animals themselves frequently fight back.

What might happen if cows' resistance and resilience became common knowledge?

EVIL WIZARD DISTRO

COWS' SELF LIBERATION

from Autumn 2017 to Spring 2018

This report originally appeared in Earth First! Journal circa 2018.

This version was formatted and published by Evil Wizard Distro circa 2026

Sometimes cows refuse to be turned into mere commodities. They run, they fight back, and they even learn how to be wild. Around the world, cows have been resisting captivity and slaughter. We've been taught that cows are mere objects, and we normally think little of how they are confined, branded, tortured, castrated, dehorned, forcibly impregnated, and slaughtered so that companies can sell their milk, meat, and skin for profit. The truth is that cows are sentient, intelligent, social, playful, resourceful, and sometimes indignant.

Last fall, a cow in Poland fled the farm that enslaved her and ran into the primeval Bialowieza Forest. This is a dangerous forest for a domesticated animal, since hungry wolves wander through it and foliage gets scarce in the winter. Luckily, the cow found a group of fifty wild bison who accepted her into their herd. She was spotted with the bison once in November and again in January. The bison seem to have protected her from predators and taught her how to survive in the woods.

In September, it was reported that an English bull had been running free for three months, "causing chaos and dodging police." In October, a cow in the state of Georgia grew tired of being pushed around, and she refused to budge when a farmer tried to move her. Instead, she rammed him against a fence over and over. The farmer was declared dead when he was brought to the emergency room. In New York, an escaped bull roamed Prospect Park before being sent to an animal sanctuary in New Jersey. In England's Greater Manchester, fifty cows escaped and were reported to have "run riot" in the suburbs before being captured.

In December, a cow in Germany escaped from a slaughterhouse. Preferring to die free rather than on an assembly line, she walked onto the train tracks in Buehl and stayed there for over an hour. She refused to move, causing an express train to come to a halt. A hunter eventually came and killed the animal. Newspapers called the cow's escape attempt "futile," but at least she did not die without putting up a fight.

That same month, Hermien the cow was being loaded onto a slaughterhouse-bound truck in the Netherlands. Evading her captors, she bolted into the woods, where she hid for over a month. She only came out at night. Hermien's supporters raised enough money to buy her from the farm, and upon her capture in February she was brought to a sanctuary where she will live out her days in peace.

In January, a cow in Poland who was being loaded onto a vehicle headed toward a slaughterhouse rammed through a metal fence and ran toward a lake. When a farmer pursued her, she resisted, breaking his arm. She then entered the lake and swam to an island. When firefighters tried to retrieve her, she escaped to a nearby peninsula. She was captured almost a month after her escape, and died while being transported.

In February, a herd of about seventy cows escaped onto a major English road, causing heavy traffic. Another herd of escaped cows reportedly caused mayhem in Ireland's town of Bailieborough.

In March, a cow in Scotland was about to be taken for slaughter when she jumped over a five-foot gate to escape. She knocked the farmer to the ground and ran into the farmyard. Seven other cows followed, trampling over the farmer's head. He died. Later that month, about twelve English cows escaped a field after heavy flooding.

In April, about a dozen cows escaped from an overturned truck in Oklahoma. A herd of cows briefly escaped in England's County Durham, but the farmer quickly rounded them up. In Texas, a cow escaped a farm with her calf, crossing a pond to arrive at an animal sanctuary. "She swam across a pond with her baby, ran through a forest for hours, until she ended up jumping our very high fence and getting into our pasture," said a cofounder of the sanctuary. Enough money was raised to purchase the cow, so she and her child will live out their lives in safety.

These are only some of the most recent stories, and there are many more if one looks back before the fall of 2017.

In 2010, for example, police in a northwestern Italian village tried to round up grazing cattle and send them to a slaughterhouse. Some of the cows evaded capture and have been living as a rebel herd ever since. They have adapted to the wild. When they eat, one cow stands guard so she can warn the rest if she sees a predator. In June 2017, there were at least six cows, possibly more, left in the herd.

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